



# LOS ANGELES COUNTY COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

*Celebrating 25 Years of Advocacy & Achievement*

## COMMISSIONERS

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Sandra Rudnick  
Adelina Sorkin, LCSW/ACSW  
Martha Trevino Powell  
Dr. Harriette F. Williams

## APPROVED MINUTES

The General Meeting of the Commission for Children and Families was held on Monday, **January 25, 2010**, in Room 739 of the Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration, 500 West Temple Street, Los Angeles. **Please note that these minutes are intended as a summary and not as a verbatim accounting or transcription of events at this meeting.**

### COMMISSIONERS PRESENT (Quorum Established)

Patricia Curry	Steven M. Olivas, Esq.
Carol O. Biondi	Dr. Maria Rochart
Ann Franzen	Stacey Savelle
Susan F. Friedman	Adelina Sorkin, LCSW/ACSW
Helen A. Kleinberg	Martha Trevino Powell
Dr. La-Doris McClaney	Dr. Harriette F. Williams
Rev. Cecil L. Murray	

### COMMISSIONERS ABSENT (Excused/Unexcused)

Sandra Rudnick

#### **I. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Curry at 10:04 a.m.

#### **II. INTRODUCTIONS**

Self introductions were made.

#### **III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

- **January 25, 2010**

Chair Curry requested that Item VI (Motion to Approve a Letter to the Board of Supervisors Recommending the Group Home Ombudsman) be continued to the February 1, 2010 meeting.

#### **Action Taken:**

On motion of Commissioner Sorkin, seconded by Commissioner McClaney, the Agenda for January 25, 2010, was unanimously approved.

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#### **IV. CHAIR'S REPORT**

Chair Curry reported the following:

- DCFS Deputy Directors Ted Myers and Susan Kerr are retiring. Ted Myers' retirement dinner is scheduled for January 28, 2010 at the Woodland Hills Country Club; Susan Kerr's retirement luncheon is scheduled for February 11, 2010 at The Castaway Restaurant.
- Commissioner Sandra Rudnick was recently involved in an automobile accident, and was hospitalized in the intensive care unit for a brief period. The Chair encouraged the Commission to send her well wishes during her recovery.
- The newest Commissioner, Dr. Maria Rochart from New Horizons Family Center was welcomed to the Commission. She was appointed by Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich on January 12, 2010.

#### **V. ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION**

- **Updates on Georgetown Project - Maryam Fatemi, DCFS**  
**Sharon Harada, Probation**  
**Jitahadi Imara, Probation**  
**Dr. Denise Herz, CSULA**

Chair Curry introduced guest speakers and explained that the Commission's interest in Probation Department operations is due to the overlap of responsibilities between DCFS and Probation. Both departments have common funding streams such as the IV-E Waiver Project, Transition Age Youth (TAY), and the Homelessness Initiative. She added that the Georgetown Project contributed to a variety of programs that directly affect both departments.

Maryam Fatemi, DCFS, distributed a document entitled, "AB129 Multi-Disciplinary Team Pilot Program: A Summary of Evaluation Results and Next Steps" ([copies on file](#)), and reported that through AB129 legislation DCFS and Probation have worked collaboratively to address the needs of crossover youth. She highlighted the departments' work through AB 129 and the Georgetown Breakthrough Series and added the following:

- Since the 1990s, California law has legislatively recognized the relationship between Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice, and mandated jurisdictions to address the needs of Crossover youth.
- In Los Angeles County, Crossover youth needs have been a priority for the Board of Supervisors and the Commission. In 1990, Chair Curry headed the 300/600 START Committee which laid the groundwork for many programs such as the Multi-Disciplinary Team Pilot Program (MDT).
- Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) 241.1 requires that when a youth is under the 300/600 disposition, both agencies (Child Welfare & Juvenile Justice) jointly determine which status best serves the child and protects society based on a written protocol.

- Recognizing weaknesses in WIC 241.1, California legislators enacted AB 129, which has made significant process changes in addressing dual status children.
- In May 2007, the AB 129 Committee, also known as the Pasadena Pilot or the MDT Pilot Project, was convened by Judge Michael Nash.

Sharon Harada, Probation Department, reported that AB129 provided an opportunity to Pilot the MDT Project for youths with cases under dual jurisdiction (300/602 status). She added that the Executive Committee of AB 129 meets monthly with Judge Nash and various stakeholders to review the progress of the MDT Pilot Project.

Dr. Denise Herz, CSULA, Professor in Criminal Justice, has been conducting research on Court and County processes for several years and gave a report on disposition outcomes of MDT evaluations v. all other 241.1 cases during the period of June 2007 through December 2008.

Jitahadi Imara, Probation Department reported the following:

- The Georgetown Model has two branches – Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice; and that one of the most important goals set by Child Welfare is to prevent youth “at the front end” from crossing over.
- The Elite Family Unit, headed by Judge Nash, DCFS Director Trish Ploehn, Probation Director Robert Taylor, DMH social workers, Community Based leaders, and several parents and youth, developed a survey to assess the needs of youths in probation camps. Data collected from Los Padrinos and Central Juvenile Hall indicated how the youth felt about interactions with Social Workers and Probations Officers and demonstrated discontent and frustration with the system; concern that placement in special education classes gives a negative connotation of being slow; and limited access to Probation Officers. In addition, Probation youth listed the kind of programs and services they would like to see implemented.

Dr. Jacqueline McCroskey, USC, reported that there have been alternative programs in youth rehabilitation every decade since the Family Treatment Unit at Central Juvenile Hall in 1969. The report to the Commission as submitted by Drs. McCroskey and Watson stress the need for services and more involvement from Community Based Leaders ([copies on file](#)).

During discussion, the Commission and stakeholder stressed the following:

- The goal of the Georgetown Practice Model is to build collaboration in a seamless way; there needs to be more connection between the Elite Family Unit, the MDT Unit, and Community Based Programs.

- Training for Social Workers is important as well as a financial incentive to retain the expertise in an organization.
- Developing staff that are Crossover experts is needed.
- Change of personnel in the organization does not provide stability to caseload management.
- Community Based Organizations need to be utilized; mentoring programs for youths and families need to be developed.
- Caseloads for Social Workers and Probation Officers need to be reduced to allow for improved treatment.
- Emphasis needs to be placed on prevention strategies. If youth are crossover cases then the system has failed.
- Youth need to be heard and their recommendations turned into policies.

**Action Taken:**

Verbal reports by Sharon Harada and Jitahadi Imara, Probation, Maryam Fatemi, DCFS, and Dr. Denise Herz were received and filed. Chair Curry invited Commissioners to assist her in compiling her notes on the Roundtable meetings of January 11 and 25, 2010, in an effort to bring recommendations to the Board of Supervisors on issues raised at both meetings.

**VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Brenda Dabney, Children's Law Center, provided public comment.

**IX. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were none.

**X. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned by Chair Curry at 12:00 p.m.